

## **AZ LEARNS Enhancements**

**Purpose:** To ensure the academic success of students attending new schools in “F” school districts.

**Rationale:** School districts that have consistently demonstrated an inability to achieve acceptable student outcomes should be subject to state-level interventions when a new school site is opened.

Existing schools in “F” districts receive state intervention and assistance through the standard AZ LEARNS process (A.R.S. § 15-241). However, under this statute newly opened schools in these same districts will receive no state-level assistance.

Due to the established record of poor academic performance in “F” districts the state should require that any new schools be subject to state intervention and/or oversight until the schools demonstrate acceptable levels of achievement.

**Action:** The Board should pursue legislation to accomplish the following:

- Amend A.R.S. § 15-241 to clarify that the method for determining “F” districts is identical to the existing method for schools (three consecutive “Ds”);
- Provide the Board with the authority to mandate interventions in new schools that are opening in districts that have an “F” classification. This could be accomplished at the school-level (similar to the existing process for “F” schools), or at a district-level through the existing academic receivership statute;
- Include incentives for “A” districts and charters to oversee the management of newly opened schools in “F” districts.

## **Norm-Referenced Test (NRT) Requirement**

**Purpose:** To eliminate the statutory requirement for the Board to adopt and implement a nationally standardized norm-referenced achievement test in reading, language arts and mathematics.

**Rationale:** A.R.S. § 15-741 requires the Board to adopt and implement a nationally standardized norm-referenced achievement test in reading, language arts and mathematics. This requirement is currently met through the administration of the Stanford Achievement Test 10 (SAT 10). To meet this requirement within existing resources, and to keep the time dedicated to testing to a minimum, the Board created the Dual Purpose Assessment (DPA). The DPA is essentially two separate assessments integrated into a single administration - currently AIMS and the SAT 10.

Subsequent to the adoption of Arizona's Common Core Standards work began around the nation to develop new assessments. Once completed these new assessments will replace AIMS. To accomplish this Arizona joined the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). PARCC is a consortium of 23 states that have adopted common standards and are working together to build common assessments. These assessments will be completed and administered by the 2014 – 2015 school year.

Because the PARCC assessments are developed cooperatively with several other states it will no longer be possible to administer a DPA. This will require separate administrations of both the PARCC assessments and the SAT 10 for all Arizona schools. The separate administration of these assessments will require additional testing time and will result in a significant increase in statewide assessment costs.

Additionally, because the PARCC assessment will be administered used in 22 other states, it will be able to provide comparative data similar to what is currently available through the SAT 10.

**Action:** The Board should seek legislation to eliminate the requirement to adopt and implement a nationally standardized norm-referenced achievement test.